

“I am the Bread of Life”

John 6:25-59 (ESV)

Key verse 35: “Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.’”

Good morning, this message is titled I Am the Bread of Life, and the key verse is verse 35: “Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.’” My opening questions are "Are you hungry? What is your favorite food?" In this passage, Jesus introduces to the hungry the bread of life, which has come down from heaven. This bread is known as true, living bread, the bread that gives eternal life. Do you want to have this bread? In this passage, Jesus teaches us what that bread is and how we can get it. May God bless each of us to eat the bread of life until we can be fully satisfied. This message has 3 parts: 1 - People are Hungry, 2, Jesus is the True Bread, and 3, Jesus' Flesh is Our True Bread.

Part 1: People are Hungry

Look at verse 26: “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.”

What did Jesus mean that they ate their fill of the loaves? Prior to this, Jesus performed a very well-known miracle. Jesus fed 5,000 people with just 5 loaves and 2 fish, and they ate until they were all satisfied. But they still wanted more. They wanted to make him king so he could always give them bread. Then they chased after him and they finally found him.

The Jewish people of Jesus's time had difficult lives. They lived in poverty and experienced hunger regularly. When Jesus miraculously provided them with bread, they were satisfied, but then they wanted seconds, and maybe even thirds. What was Jesus's response to them?

Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.”

Jesus knew the people's true motive in chasing after him. Even though they went to great lengths to find Jesus, he was not pleased with them. Jesus did not perform the miracle so the people could always have physical bread. They should have been seeking Jesus for who he is, not just for the benefits he provides.

Look at verse 27: “Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.”

Here Jesus teaches us that there are two kinds of food: perishable, and imperishable. And Jesus wants us to work for imperishable food. Food symbolizes not just food but also our source of life and health. We need perishable food to maintain our physical life, but we need imperishable food to have spiritual life and health. Where can we find spiritual food? The Son of Man gives this food to us.

Look at verse 28: "Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?"

They were willing to potentially do any work that Jesus suggested and hopefully receive spiritual food in return.

But in verse 29: "Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

What kind of work is that? This is a work that belongs to God. The people didn't understand yet. Then they started demanding that Jesus perform some more miracles so that they could really believe in him. And not just any miracle, preferably miracles that included giving them more bread. They even tried citing a Bible story about manna to convince Jesus:

Then Jesus turned their attention from physical food to spiritual food again, calling it the true bread from heaven that came from God. So what is this spiritual bread?

Jesus says in Verse 33 "For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

The spiritual bread is a person. So what was their response?

Look at verse 34: "They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.'"

People are hungry, but their hunger is corrupted. They should have genuine spiritual hunger that leads to a right relationship with Jesus. Instead, they have a corrupted hunger that convinces them that physical things will satisfy them fully. So, Jesus guided them to spiritual bread.

In our time, we are surrounded by lots of advertisements trying to convince us that physical bread will satisfy our hunger. Does anyone know the theme song for Burger King? At BK, have it your way! You rule! In common life, I live with two brothers in Christ and we made a theme song for our daily bread meeting, and hopefully you can all think of this whenever you go to Burger King: At Daily Bread, have it Jesus' way! Jesus rules! People are hungry. Jesus directed people to spiritual bread, which will satisfy our most important hunger, which is spiritual hunger.

Part 2: Jesus is the True Bread

In verse 33, Jesus said that the bread of God is *he* who comes down from heaven, but in verse 35a, "Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life;"

Does this statement remind you of anything else from the Bible? In Exodus 3:14, Moses asked God what his name was after God appeared to him in the burning bush. God said to Moses "I am who I am." "I am" is God's name. By saying I am the bread of life, Jesus is claiming that he is God. But why did he say he is the bread of life?

God doesn't need bread. He is self-sufficient. But he is the source of life. Not only physical life, which is temporary, but spiritual life for human beings. But how can we have this bread of life?

Look at verse 35b: "whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." Jesus is very generous. Anyone who comes to him can have this bread of life. He

invites everyone, including you. The bread of life satisfies our hunger fully. It's not like physical bread that makes us full for a short while but then we have to eat again.

When you come to Jesus, what should you do? Jesus says to believe in him. This is not just textbook knowledge that Jesus is a real person. It is really trusting his words and having a changed life that reflects our belief in him. Anyone who believes in Jesus in this way will receive the bread of life, and never thirst.

Even though Jesus performed miracles, the people didn't believe he was the bread of life (36). They even grumbled about him because of his I am statement, saying "is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" They couldn't accept that someone they knew and grew up with was truly God himself.

Jesus didn't get discouraged though. Look at verses 37-40. He kept preaching to the people and knew that some of them would believe. Look at verse 37: Jesus said all that the Father gives me will come to me. He came to do God's will, which is to give people the bread of life.

Look at verse 44. Jesus believed that God draws people to himself. Jesus didn't back down from his claim that he is the bread of life. Even though people were offended by the claim, he said "truly, truly I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. And again, he said "I am the living bread that came down from heaven."

Part 3: Jesus' Flesh is Our True Bread

Up until verse 51, Jesus claimed that he is the bread of life. But look at 51b: And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh. Now Jesus starts to explain how his flesh will be given for the life of the world. Look at verses 53 through 59. The people were shocked to hear Jesus say these things.

Even saying that he is the bread of life seemed offensive to the people, but once he mentioned that the bread was his flesh, they got more offended. They said "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

Instead of walking back his statement, Jesus went even further. Look at verse 53: Jesus said "truly, truly" again which means that we should really listen. He said "Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

Ok, we have to do this, but what does it mean? How do we eat Jesus's flesh? How do we drink Jesus's blood? Are we literally supposed to go find Jesus and eat him? Of course not. So Jesus explained what it means to truly eat his flesh and drink his blood.

Look at verse 54: Jesus promised that he would give his flesh and blood so that whoever feeds on him and drinks his blood has eternal life and will be raised up on the last day.

Our world has been infected and fallen ever since Adam and Eve's sin. Everyone sins by breaking God's commandments, like lying, stealing, and even coveting. As a result, everyone dies, not just a physical death, but also a spiritual death. People are not connected to God, the source of spiritual life. Even though they are physically living, they are spiritually dead. And the end result is eternal separation from God in hell.

Jesus promised to give his flesh for the life of the world. This passage took place around the time of the Passover. This was when the Jewish people were spared from God's plague on the firstborn by sacrificing lambs. Instead of dying in the land of Egypt, the lambs took their place so they could escape from the land of slavery and eventually enter the promised land.

John the Baptist proclaimed that Jesus is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This Passover lamb pointed to Jesus, who would sacrifice himself to pay the price for our sins so that we could have eternal life. Jesus was without sin. He was a perfect sacrifice. Before he was crucified, his flesh was broken. His blood was shed. Then he rose again on the third day. This made a way for sinful people to have forgiveness of sin.

The way to receive forgiveness of sin is repenting, or turning from our sins and believing Jesus really died for our sin. In that way, whoever believes has eternal life. This eternal life starts whenever someone believes in Jesus. This eternal life means being connected to God, the source of spiritual life, starting now, and also, being raised up from the dead to spend eternity in heaven with God. And this is not through any good work we do, but only by believing in what Jesus did for us on the cross.

We can eat Jesus, the bread of life by repenting and believing he died for our sins.

Look at verses 56-58.

When we eat Jesus, the bread of life, by repenting and believing in him, we do not only gain forgiveness of sins and eternal life. We also become united with Jesus. In verses 56-57, Jesus said that "Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me." Jesus contrasted his flesh and blood, the bread of life, with the physical bread that the Israelites ate in the wilderness. The bread of life was comparatively so much better.

Eating the bread symbolizes union with Jesus. The living bread, the crucified Jesus, lives in anyone who consumes him. When we have union with the crucified Jesus, we grow in his image everyday. We become more and more like him. One way to practically do this is to come to God's word everyday and apply it in our lives.

One word to describe the bread of life is love. Jesus went to great lengths to make it possible for us to have a relationship with him. Jesus lived among human beings and humbly served them. He devoted his whole life to them, and even died on the cross for their sins. And it's all about love. That's Jesus's underlying motivation for everything he does.

Jesus is so compassionate. He couldn't help but to give bread to the people. There was a great crowd and he cared for their hunger. Jesus healed so many people, some of whom never followed him afterwards. Jesus drove out demons from people. Jesus restored people's mental health and their social standing. Jesus even blessed people's children when they brought them to him. He was so loving and cared for everyone.

But this time, when the people asked for bread, he had to say no. It was for their own benefit that he refused to give them bread. He made the bread and then used that miracle to teach them about who he really is, which was much more important than physical bread.

Even when the people rejected Jesus's teaching, he didn't give up. He kept teaching them that he is the bread of life. Jesus was saying, why do you want the bread so much? Why do you love the bread so much? Why don't you want me? Why don't you love me? I am the bread of *life*. Jesus is saying he is better than any material blessing.

It makes sense too. Nothing is better than Jesus. But people keep focusing on the blessing instead of the blesser. Jesus's life was like God's love letter to his people. But, overall, the people rejected Jesus and chose to follow their own idols.

People not only want bread and material sustenance, they want to be the ruler of their own life. People want usually wealth and good relationships and career success. They're willing to go to great lengths to get those things, but in the end it's not truly satisfying. And also, it doesn't lead to being in closer union with Jesus.

I personally found how to be truly satisfied in Jesus. Even though I had hunger for lots of things in the past, like being a lawyer at a big law firm making lots of money, I gave up that dream. Instead, I have learned to eat Jesus' flesh and drink his blood. Don't get me wrong! I do not practice cannibalism. I just mean that I have learned to come and come back to Jesus' cross and believe in him that he broke his body and shed his blood for me. In doing so, I am reminded of God's love and forgiveness of my sins. Also, I am learning to believe that Jesus abides in me, he has united himself with me. As I surrender my thoughts and life to his, I can feel and see that I am growing like Him. In Law School, instead of pursuing a big law firm job, I started sharing the gospel to U of I students every week. Even though most of them didn't really appreciate it, and I don't think any of them thanked me, and I didn't get paid, and I didn't put it on my resume, I did it anyways, because I wanted to serve the students with Jesus's love. When I graduated, I accepted a government job so I could spend time doing campus ministry at UIC. These days, I go to the UIC campus after work to share about the bread of life with young people and I lead daily bread in common life. I have a happy life, and I'm truly satisfied. I have the best blessing, which is a relationship with God himself. So, are you hungry? Try eating the bread of life.